

Shoalstone Pool Limited

Safeguarding Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Policy forms part of the Terms and Conditions of service, and applies to all activities at Shoalstone Pool where children, vulnerable adults and young people under 18 years of age are present, and to all working in such activities, whether as an employee, volunteer, management representative or otherwise.

2. OBJECTIVE

2.1 The Objective of Shoalstone Pool's Safeguarding Policy is to contribute to the personal safety of all children, vulnerable adults and young people under 18 years of age using the facilities of Shoalstone Pool, through actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Shoalstone Pool Limited shall appoint one of their number as Responsible Officer (RO) for all aspects of child protection awareness and implementation of this policy. The RO will normally be the same individual as he/she appointed to the post of Pool Manager. Where no Pool Manager has been appointed, then the role of RO will fall to the Secretary of Shoalstone Pool Limited.

3.2 The RO will be responsible to the Management for:

- a. ensuring that this policy is implemented throughout Shoalstone Pool's activities;
- b. ensuring all necessary child protection-related enquiries, procedures and investigations are carried out;
- c. reporting results of screening enquiries and for preserving a "need to know" levels of confidentiality and access to secure records;
- d. ensuring secure and confidential records relating to child protection matters;
- e. if the appointed RO is not the same individual as he or she appointed to the post of Pool Manager, then the RO will be responsible for liaison with the Pool Manager and the board of Shoalstone Pool Limited to ensure implementation of the policy by all staff and volunteers;
- f. liaison with social services at a formal and informal level on child protection matters, likewise with the police;
- g. the reporting to all meetings of the Management on the implementation of this policy;
- h. the reporting of allegations and suspicion of abuse to the appropriate authorities;

i. ensuring there is adequate induction and training relating to child protection matters;

j. ensuring that each activity carried out by Shoalstone Pool Limited is sound in terms of child protection as regards personnel, practices, premises.

k. checking all incident reports made by staff and volunteers, countersigning them, and making such reference to authority as is appropriate, after consultation with the Pool Manager or senior staff member etc as detailed below.

3.3 The Pool Manager employed by Shoalstone Pool Limited shall ensure active compliance with this policy by all working at Shoalstone Pool, and shall work closely with the RO (where this is a separate individual) to ensure this, affording the RO every assistance to this end. All other officers, staff and voluntary workers of Shoalstone Pool Limited shall actively endeavour to implement this policy.

4. PERSONNEL - CHECKS

4.1 Shoalstone Pool Limited's aim is to ensure as far as is possible that anyone, paid or voluntary, who seeks to work with children and young people through Shoalstone Pool's activities and who gains substantial access to them thereby (whether within activity hours and/or beyond) is as safe to do so in child protection terms as can be guaranteed.

4.2 Therefore the RO will ensure that the following checks are carried out on all prospective directors, staff and volunteers whose work may create a situation of substantial access to children and young people:

a. Criminal records/Disclosure and Barring Service check at enhanced level via an approved agency route.

b. Personal referee, nominated by the applicant - a person who is not related to the applicant and who preferably knows of the applicant's character, trustworthiness, any previous experience of working with/looking after children and young people

4.3 The forms and formats to be used shall be in the general form as attached, and the written consent of the applicant must be obtained to enable such enquiries to be made. No application may proceed unless such consent is given by the applicant.

4.4 The enquiry forms and authorities will be completed at an interview with the applicant, normally to be carried out by the Pool Manager. The applicant may request this be done in confidence with only the RO present.

4.5 At the interview stage, the Pool Manager shall give to the applicant, and get the applicant to give written confirmation of receipt a letter/notice stating the checks are required as a condition of working at Shoalstone Pool with children and young people.

4.6 No applicant may start work at Shoalstone Pool unsupervised without the above enquiries being completed, but the Pool Manager may, in consultation with the RO, authorise an applicant to commence supervised (one-to-one basis) work where it is absolutely clear there will be no problems arising from the checks.

4.7 The Pool Manager/RO shall be responsible for sending the enquiries to their destinations, under a strictly confidential heading in all cases, and shall ensure security of records.

4.8 Shoalstone Pool Limited's policy is to recheck all board members, staff and volunteers after three years service, in terms of police and social services. This will be undertaken by the RO.

4.9 At all times the onus is on the applicant/employee/volunteer to reveal any conviction, caution, bind-over, probation order, or pending prosecution, whether imposed prior to or within the period the applicant works at Shoalstone Pool.

4.10 The applicant shall produce proof of identity, preferably passport or photographic, and of residence, which checks the Pool Manager or RO shall note as having been undertaken in the applicant's records.

4.11 The RO will not accept any previous reference, police check, social services endorsement etc provided by an applicant in substitution for the above enquiry process. At all times the initiative must lie with Shoalstone Pool Limited to make its own, completely independent enquiries.

5. REPORTING OF ENQUIRY RESULTS

5.1 The RO will indicate to the board of Shoalstone Pool Limited and/or to the Pool Manager whether an applicant is suitable to work at Shoalstone Pool, as revealed by the results of the checks at 4.2 a-b above.

5.2 Where a Schedule One offence is indicated by the above process, the RO must rule an applicant unsuitable, and that person must not undertake any form of work or help at Shoalstone Pool. If such an attempt is made by a convicted Schedule One Offender or by any person prohibited under legislation from working with children and young people or from being in proximity to places where they may gather etc, the RO shall immediately inform Social Services and the Police.

5.3 The RO will recommend at each meeting of the Management on the acceptance or otherwise of applicants. No details other than an applicant was accepted or otherwise shall be given or minuted. The Management shall consider the RO's recommendation and their decision shall be recorded in the minutes.

5.4 On receipt of all replies to enquiries, the applicant shall be invited to attend an interview with the RO. The RO will show the applicant all replies received.

5.5 Any discrepancies revealed between the applicant's statements and the replies must be investigated thoroughly with the applicant by the RO, especially as regards dates of residence, employment, voluntary work, past offences and convictions. In particular, the applicant should be advised as to the necessary procedures s/he can take if s/he queries the accuracy of a reference or check. The replies given may be taken into account by the RO, in making a recommendation to the Management as at 5.3.

5.6 Where an applicant declines to attend such an interview as at 5.4, the RO shall write to the applicant to inform him/her that their application has not been successful.

5.7 The RO shall be authorised to undertake any additional enquiries as sanctioned by the applicant as may assist the making of a recommendation to the Management.

6. PERSONNEL RECORDS

6.1 The RO shall maintain a confidential file on each applicant in which shall be kept:

- a. copies of all forms, consents and replies as in paragraph 4.2 above;
- b. a progress check form indicating progress of the checks and replies;
- c. notes for file - where the RO receives a phone call or other non-written communication, the main points shall be recorded and filed with the applicant's records.

6.2 The file of an unsuccessful applicant shall be kept for six months and then safely destroyed by the RO - likewise for a successful applicant who declines to commence with Shoalstone Pool Limited - this period will be increased to 12 months from the date of leaving Shoalstone Pool Limited's service for any successful applicant who commences work with Shoalstone Pool.

6.3 Anyone working with Shoalstone Pool Limited has the right to inspect their own confidential records as at 6.1 above, and may do so on request to the RO who shall not withhold consent unreasonably and will do so within one working day. The RO may only withhold such agreement and access if to do so might jeopardise a Shoalstone Pool Limited or police or social services investigation relating to child protection matters or might lead to a child's welfare and safety being compromised. The RO need give no reason for such withholding of consent. S/he will report such a situation to the Management, purely on the lines that a request was made and refused for reasons relating to the welfare of children.

6.4 The Pool Manager – if not the same individual as the RO - may have access to such records as kept at 6.1 above, with the caveat at 6.3 above applying.

7. REPORTING OF CONCERNS

7.1 Those working for Shoalstone Pool Limited have a duty to ensure that any suspicion, incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to the protection of children, young people under 18 or vulnerable adults as provided below.

7.2 Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in any number of ways. This may be by what a child, vulnerable adult, or young person under 18 says, about themselves or another child, vulnerable adult or young person. It may be through interception of a written item, or through observation of activity or behaviour giving cause for concern. It may be through

changes in behaviour or attitude. There may be physical, emotional pointers such as bruising, staining, inappropriate behaviour or knowledge. These and many other signs can be picked up by workers.

7.3 IT IS VITAL FOR THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF THIS POLICY THAT ALL INCIDENTS, OBSERVATIONS, HOWEVER INSIGNIFICANT-SEEMING, ARE LOGGED BY THE OBSERVER(S) IN THE APPROPRIATE ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORT BOOK/FORMS.

7.4 The observing worker, paid and voluntary, will make a verbal report to the Pool Manager, and also will make a written report outlining in adequate detail what was heard, seen, reported, alleged etc. Verbatim quotes from a child are important, as is the retention of anything which gave cause for concern such as a drawing, painting, writing etc. The worker will sign and date the report. The Pool/Duty Manager will countersign the report and at the end of the session or, at the latest, the next working morning, will pass it to the Responsible Officer who also will read and countersign, completing the form with comments etc as appropriate.

7.5 If more than one worker has an observation on the same incident on the day in question, a separate report is to be made by each worker and treated as above. The session leader will ensure the reports are cross-referenced and dealt with as one.

7.6 The RO will take an appropriate course of action as follows:

a. Immediate Report to Duty Officer at Social Services and/or Police: this covers any situation where, in the judgement of the RO, after due consultation with workers involved, and/or the Pool Manager, there is perceived to be an immediate danger to a child or detection of criminal offences against a child or other form of obvious, ongoing/future/recent serious harm. Where the Duty Social Worker cannot be located, the Police should be informed and told of this problem in locating the Social Services officer. Where a child seems at imminent harm of danger/ injury or worse, then the RO is authorised to make a complaint to the Police in order to secure immediate action and protection of a child. NO PROTOCOL SHOULD EVER INHIBIT THIS COURSE OF ACTION IF IT IS TRULY WARRANTED.

b. Most situations will not require reference as in a. above. It will be more appropriate for the RO to raise them informally with a designated liaison contact at Social

Services, provided that social worker is dealing with child-related matters in the course of their duties.

7.7 The point of making informal reports as above should not be under-estimated. It may well be that, from a child protection viewpoint, the information given to social services in a piecemeal manner, informally, is potentially a major way of picking up issues as they develop. Our piece of information may be one part of a jigsaw - it may even be the first piece. It may complete "a puzzle".

7.8 The RO, and all workers, should bear in mind that while employed by Shoalstone Pool Limited we may not be privy to much information about a given child's situation, as held by Social Services - but our item of information may assist in promoting a child's welfare.

8. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST WORKERS OR MANAGEMENT

8.1 If a child, vulnerable adult or young person under 18 years of age, or a parent or carer of same makes allegations to Shoalstone Pool Limited against any person working for Shoalstone Pool, whether paid or unpaid, or a member of the management, the following procedure will come into force - incident reports will be made at all stages as appropriate:

a. The person receiving the complaint will contact the Pool Manager who will at once notify the RO. On receipt of the complaint, the RO will contact Social Services to apprise them of the situation. Normally this will be by informal channels but if there is a criminal allegation, the contact will be formal to the duty social worker and also to the police.

b. The Chairman should inform the person against whom an allegation has been made as soon as possible UNLESS THERE APPEARS TO BE A CASE THAT THIS MIGHT PREJUDICE A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. This will require consultation with the police to ascertain.

8.2 The course of action to be taken from thereon will be decided by the nature of the allegation(s).

a. If a criminal allegation e.g. of sexual abuse and impropriety is made, or physical assault, or inappropriate behaviour, the Chairman will activate the Disciplinary Procedure and suspend the person from any activity at Shoalstone Pool under the heading of alleged Gross Misconduct. If it is warranted, this may be without pay, should the evidence appear strong enough to justify the matter. For example, a worker discovered in a situation of actual wrongful behaviour. The matter must then be reported immediately to the police and duty social worker. The suspension will remain in force unless and until the police and/or social services confirm there was no substance to the report. An incident report will be made and treated as confidential.

b. If there is no criminal allegation the RO will gather as much detail from available sources of information as possible, by way of investigation, but not including seeking to interview any child if there is a criminal allegation (which is a matter for the authorities). The RO should examine to see if there is any company report relating to a child protection matter concerning any involved child. This is most important. Where appropriate, the RO should consider whether suspension of the worker is advisable and recommend accordingly to the Chairman. This may include a situation which, though non-criminal, could lead to a decision of gross misconduct.

c The RO will report to the Chairman on the outcome of such an investigation and will recommend whether the circumstances constitute grounds either:

A. to treat the matter as a disciplinary issue, either as misconduct or gross misconduct, with associated rights of appeal

or B. to dismiss the allegations as unfounded, or to make such other non-disciplinary recommendations as are appropriate. The Chairman shall consider such recommendations and report to the next meeting of the Management of action taken.

The person against whom such non-criminal allegations are made should have opportunity to give an explanation or answer to any allegation at an interview conducted by the RO and the course of such an interview should be minuted by Secretary who should be present.

d. In the case of 8.2b above the suspension will remain in force on completion of the RO's enquiries if the Chairman is of the view that the misconduct is so serious as to constitute grounds for immediate termination of employment or voluntary service until the dismissal procedure has been implemented. The person suspended should be advised by the Chairman of a person within Shoalstone Pool Limited with whom s/he can communicate during the period of suspension on matters relating to their employment, and the person so appointed should be told clearly, as should the person suspended the address to which any communication should be made, whether or not communication includes personal contact, and the hours/times of contact.

e. In the situation of 10.2 a above, if legal proceedings result in the conviction of the person for a serious offence involving a child, the Chairman shall consider any report or information from the police and /or social services and shall recommend to the directors the appropriate course of action up to and including instant dismissal. If the proceedings do not result in a conviction but there is evidence to suggest misconduct, the procedure in 10.2 b may be invoked.

f. In the situation of 10.2 b above the Chairman shall write to the person concerned to inform them of the outcome of the investigation and will inform the person of any decision to terminate employment or of the date and conditions, if any, of a return to

duties, where a disciplinary offence has been committed but is not of a nature as to warrant immediate dismissal.

h. Under no circumstances is any person suspended to re-enter Shoalstone Pool premises or property whilst under suspension. This prohibition includes activities where there are no children/ young persons present.

i. In appropriate circumstances, the Chairman may effect an instant dismissal if the evidence warrants it. For example, someone caught in the act of committing an offence involving a child on Project property. This will be reported in the manner detailed above, and the RO will make the appropriate reference to Social Services, or, if appropriate the Police (remembering to report to Social Services). The personal file of such a worker will have the necessary note of action taken entered in it.

j. Lesser forms of misconduct involving a worker in a child protection incident where the worker's actions or behaviour are inconsistent with children's welfare should be reported and dealt with under the ordinary Misconduct provisions of the Disciplinary Procedure, with appropriate records made in the person's file. Social Services should be informed if the matter is related to child protection, and it is possible they may express a view on the person's suitability to continue to work at Shoalstone Pool. Each case will be individual, judged on its own merits. The RO and the Chairman will liaise on such issues and a report with recommendations made if necessary to the Management next meeting.

k. Where the Police are called in, the provisions of Terms and Conditions as regards e.g. interviews with workers etc and children apply.

9. INDUCTION AND TRAINING

9.1 Shoalstone Pool Limited shall ensure that there is adequate and appropriate induction and ongoing training and information to all employed staff and voluntary workers concerning child protection matters, which shall be the responsibility of the Pool Manager to devise and implement, in consultation and liaison with the RO. All directors, employees and voluntary workers shall have this policy drawn to their attention on joining Shoalstone Pool in either an employed or voluntary capacity, and it shall be the duty of the Pool Manager, in consultation with the RO, to ensure that such persons are fully aware of how and where to access the full policy statement, and that the Pool Manager/RO is the person through whom they should route queries concerning the policy.

10. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

11.1 The Management shall review this policy, its effectiveness and regarding its implementation every two years and the RO and/or the Secretary shall ensure that the views of all workers, paid and voluntary, are sought and reflected in such a review process, and that any statutory authority input is sought as appropriate.